

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6767

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 2565

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CS, NU, VE

SUBJECT: THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE

SUMMARY: THE 12 NICARAGUANS WHO IN OCTOBER 1977 ISSUED A CALL FROM COSTA RICA FOR SOMOZA'S OUSTER AND FORMATION OF A NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE FSLN, HAVE ANNOUNCED THEIR PLAN TO RETURN TO NICARAGUA. THERE IS AN OUTSTANDING WARRANT FOR THEIR ARREST BASED ON CHARGES THEY HAVE INCITED VIOLENCE. THEIR RETURN WOULD BE A CAUSE CELEBRE WHETHER OR NOT THEY WERE JAILED UPON THEIR RETURN. THE LINKAGE OF THE 12 WITH THE FSLN RAISES THE QUESTIONS OF WHY THEY WOULD ANNOUNCE THEIR RETURN NOW AND WHETHER IT COULD BE RELATED TO FSLN PLANS.

1. AN UPDATED COMMUNIQUE PURPORTEDLY SIGNED IN COSTA RICA BY ALL MEMBERS OF THE 12 ANNOUNCING THEIR INTENTION TO RETURN TO NICARAGUA APPEARED IN LA PRENSA OF JUNE 4 ACCOMPANIED BY THE FIRST GROUP PORTRAIT OF THE 12 TO APPEAR LOCALLY. IN THE COMMUNIQUE, THEY ASSERT THAT THE UNITY OF THE PEOPLE TO OVERTHROW THE DICTARORSHIP FOR WHICH THEY CALLED IN OCTOBER 1977 HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. THE COMMUNIQUE
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CREDITS THIS ACHIEVEMENT TO THE POLITICAL-MILITARY OFFENSIVE LAUNCHED BY THE FSLN IN OCTOBER. THEY STATE THAT THEIR CONTINUED ABSENCE FROM NICARAGUA IS DUE TO THE OUTSTANDING WARRANT FOR THEIR ARREST. THEY SAY THAT IN ANNOUNCING THEIR INTENTION TO RETURN, THEY ARE NOT SEEKING CLEMENCY FROM THE REGIME, BUT RATHER THEY WILL ACCOMPLISHD THEIR RETURN BASED UPON POPULAR SUPPORT.

2. THE RETURN OF THE 12 (ACTUALLY SEVERAL OF THEM HAVE NOT RESIDED IN NICARAGUA FOR SEVERAL YEARS) WOULD BE A VERY SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL EVENT WHICH WOULD PRESENT SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR THE GON. IF THEY WERE IMMEDIATELY ARRESTED, THEIR DETENTION COULD BECOME A CAUSE FOR WIDE-SPREAD PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS AS WELL AS BECOMING FUEL FOR INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM OF THE REGIME. IF THEY WERE NOT ARRESTED, THEY WOULD LIKELY CONTINUE TO CHALLENGE THE GON'S TOLERANCE BY PUBLICLY PUSHING THEIR THEME OF THE NEED FOR A POLITICAL-MILITARY (FSLN) OFFENSIVE.

3. WHY THE 12 WOULD ANNOUNCE NOW THEIR INTENTION TO RETURN TO NICARAGUA LEADS TO TWO LINES OF SPECULATION. IT HAS BEEN RUMORED FOR SEVERAL MONTHS THAT DIVISIONS HAVE DEVELOPED AMONG THE 12 OVER THE TIMING OF FURTHER VIOLENCE IN ORDER TO OVERTHROW SOMOZA. THERE HAS ALSO BEEN SPECULATION THAT THEY WERE LOSING THEIR INFLUENCE OVER THE TERCARIO FACTION OF THE FSLN (REF B). IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THEY SERIOUSLY MISJUDGED SOMOZA'S STAYING POWER AND HAVE INCREASINGLY FELT THEMSELVES TO BE ISOLATED FROM THE SCENE OF THE ACTION, I.E. NICARAGUA. IN THIS REGARD, IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT OPPOSITION POLITICAL ACTIVISTS HAVE INFORMED EMBOFFS THAT SEVERAL ELEMENTS OF THE LOOSE COLAITION OF OPPOSITION ORGANIZATIONS, THE "BROAD OPPOSITION FRONT" (FAO), HAVE REJECTED A PROPOSAL THAT THE 12 BE INVITED TO JOIN THE FRONT. THIS LINE OF SPECULATION WOULD LEAD TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE 12 MAY HAVE DECIDED THE ONLY WAY THEY COULD PLAY A SIGNIFICANT FUTURE ROLE IN NICARAGUA POLITICAL EVENTS WAS TO EXPOSE THEMSELVES TO ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT IN NICARAGUA IN ORDER TO

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ASSUME A CAUSE CELEBRE ROLE.

4. A SECOND LINE OF SPECULATION, NOT NECESSARILY CONTRADICTING THE FORMER, IS THAT AS A RESULT OF THEIR FSLN RELATIONSHIP THEY INTEND TO ORCHESTRATE THEIR RETURN WITH A LONG-RUMORED MAJOR OFFENSIVE OF THE FSLN. THE LOGIC OF THIS SPECULATION WOULD LIE IN THEIR RETURN AND IMPRISONMENT REPRESENTING A POLICICAL OFFENSIVE WHICH WOULD FACILITATE THE MILITARY OFFENSIVE OF THE FSLN. IN THIS SCENARIO, THE RETURN OF THE 12 COULD ALSO REPRESENT AN ACT OF FAITH THAT A REVOLQTIONARY INTIATIVE BY THE FSLN IN THE NEAR FUTURE WOULD SUCCEED SO THAT THEIR PROBABLE IMPRISONMENT WOULD BE OF SHORT DURATION AND THEY WOULD BE SOON LIBERATED BY A NEW SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE COMMUNIQUE DOES NOT STATE WHEN THE 12 ARE INTENDING TO RETURN, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THEY WOULD HAVE ANNOUNCED THEIR INTENTION WITHOUT PLANS TO FOLLOW THROUGH IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THE EMBASSY IS INCLINED TO GIVE GREATER CREDENCE TO THE LINE OF THOUGHT THAT A RETURN OF THE 12 WOULD BE RELATED TO FSLN INTENTIONS. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE 12 FROM THE BEGINNING HAS BEEN TO TRY TO PROVIDE A NON-MARXIST ORIENTATION TO THE FSLN AND SERVE AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE FSLN AND NICARAGUAN OPPOSITION GROUPS. ALTHOUGH SOME MEMBERS OF THE 12 MIGHT BE WILLING TO SUBJECT THEMSELVES TO IMPRISON-

MENT JUST TO END THEIR EXILE STATUS, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THERE WOULD
BE UNANIMITY FOR THIS POSITION. IF THE 12 ARE IN FACT UNITED IN AN
INTENTION TO TO RETURN IN THE NEAR FUTURE, IT IS MORE LIKELY THE
DECISION RESULTS FROM THEIR BELPEF THAT NICARAGUA WILL SOON BE THE
SCENE OF SUCCESSFUL REVOLUTIONARY ACTION IN WHICH THEY SHOULD HAVE
SOME ROLE TO PLAY.
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